

Healthcare could be de-railed with new senator

President Obama's healthcare legislation is no longer a guarantee for the Democratic party who lost their crucial 60th senate vote on Tuesday when Massachusetts elected its first Republican senator since 1972.

Tuesday's special election was to fill the U.S. Senate seat formerly held by Senator Ted Kennedy. The Kennedys have held that seat since 1952 with Ted Kennedy holding the seat for 47 years.

Kennedy was an advocate for many issues, most importantly healthcare, civil rights and increasing the minimum wage. He had a remarkable record; one the democrats hoped to rely upon this year.

That was the first mistake made by Massachusetts democrats. Martha Coakly, the Democratic candidate, had been predicted to win the election from the beginning. She had been a popular attorney general and had name recognition and fundraising ability.

The Republican candidate was not considered a threat by democrats. Scott Brown was a state senator and relied on attending events, TV ads, automated calls and other methods to reach the public.

The Boston Globe reported many voters who were angry about unemployment and wanted a change since Kennedy had held that seat for almost 50 years.

The failure for the democrats in a traditionally democratic state could mean a failure for the legislation Kennedy called the "cause of my life."

Brown has already said he will go to Washington as soon as he is sworn in and will vote against the healthcare legislation.

Brown's assertion doesn't bode well for anyone except the republican party who refuses to compromise on the issue.

In Washington, healthcare is no longer about what is best for the American people. It became about party lines a long time ago.

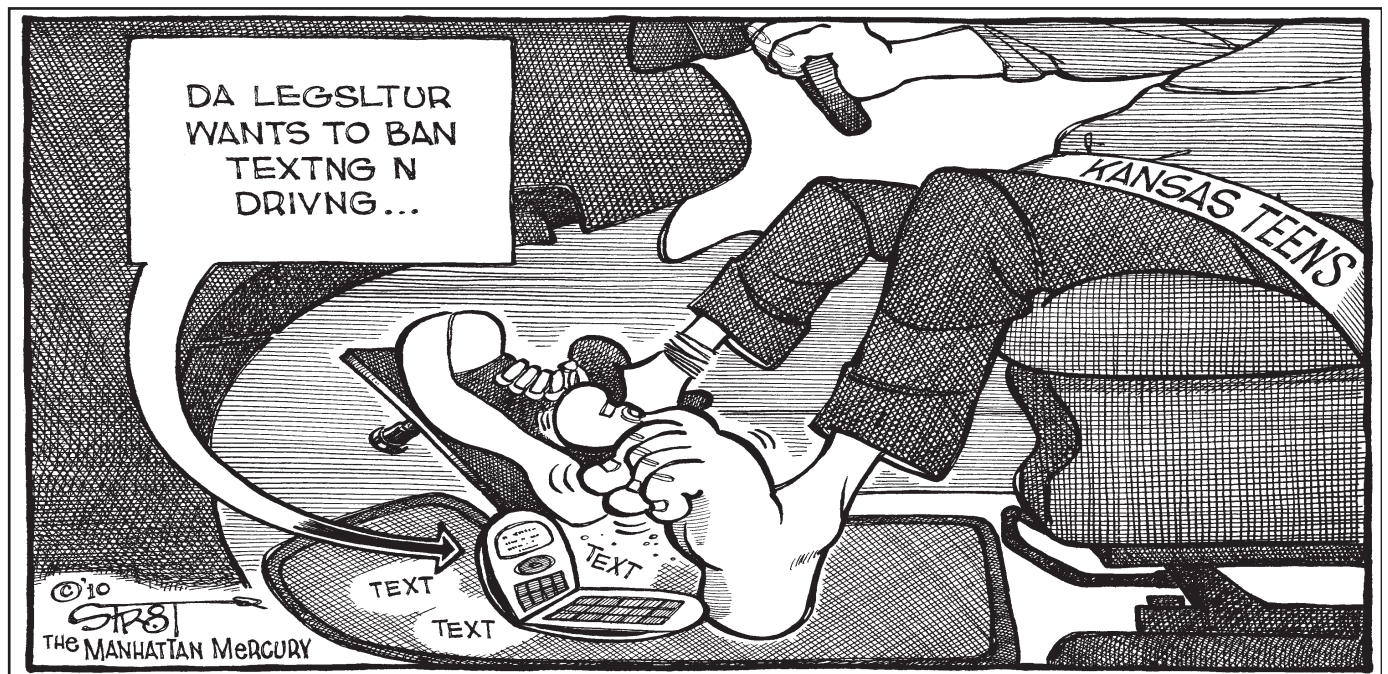
The final health bill has not been introduced yet. Committees are still working to combine the house and senate bills. But with an estimated 50 million Americans uninsured, the passage of a health bill is an important first step. Senator Kennedy recognized the importance of getting a bill passed. It didn't have to be perfect, but it did have to be a first step.

America needs a first step. Other issues in the bill can be resolved at a later date.

Healthcare is not an issue to be debated on Capitol Hill. It affects every American, either because they are uninsured, know someone who is uninsured or they are a taxpayer forced to pay increased taxes because the uninsured run up emergency room visits and are unable to pay.

Brown will not go to Washington to represent uninsured Americans. Massachusetts is the only state with universal healthcare. Hopefully he will give that some thought before casting his "no" vote in the senate. And hopefully our elected officials will give the 50 million uninsured Americans, people they represent, some thought before they cast their vote.

-Erica Bradley



Budget to be main legislative topic

The state budget will no doubt be the main topic of the legislative session.

Will we raise taxes or make further cuts?

There is an opinion by some that further cuts will only make the hole deeper.

I tend to agree with Winston Churchill's statement, "Taxing your way to prosperity is like standing in a bucket and lifting the handle."

The business community is struggling and doesn't need higher taxes to slow the economy even more.

The Governor's speech on Monday was delivered better than the nine prior State of the State addresses. He was firm

Senate Doings Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer



upfront and sometimes cautious as he spoke.

I had hoped he would not have asked for tax increases as solutions to the current fiscal crisis.

Our receipts still have not leveled off, and we need to be cautious of raising taxes, adding further burdens on the

people of Kansas. Businesses have no one to bail them out and I hope we don't increase their burden this session.

When we finish the legislative session, I hope we have made policies that will serve Kansas best with the least harm.

I always appreciate the contacts from my 40th Senate District. The office room number has changed this year to Room 225-East. However, we are still in the same room as before.

My e-mail address is: Ralph.Ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov

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The office telephone number is: (785) 296-7399

Everyone working together can achieve success

A friend said to me this week, "I just want my government to protect me." We had been discussing health care reform, social security, Medicare, etc. Her point is she doesn't want her government to provide for the social well being of the nation. I have mulled that comment repeatedly since then.

What one person needs protection from may be entirely different than another's threat. We each see threats based on their impact upon us personally.

She believes families and churches need to take responsibility for social/humanitarian needs and that government programs have allowed individuals to abandon their responsibility to each other.

Facts however do not support this. Volunteering is at a 30 year high (study from 1974 to 2005). There certainly have been ups and downs in the rate with a decline until 1989, but there has been a greater than 32 percent increase in volunteerism since that time.

It was once said, many years ago, but

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



may still hold true, "If each church 'adopted' one welfare family there would be no welfare rolls." This is a wonderful goal, but doesn't have to rule out government programs. Too often those within the church follow the golden rule, if I have the gold, I can rule your actions. Being poor or in need does not mean others have a right to rob you of your dignity.

Until we are touched by a problem we frequently do not realize the impact it may have or the problems it may initiate. My friend fears a developing lack of responsibility if government provides services and perhaps that is a fear, but I would rather feed ten poachers, than have one child die of hunger. Many of life's

circumstances are not out of choice, nor God's punishment, but rather they are life based on economic downturns, layoffs, or disease.

A dear friend of our family was raised on welfare. His mother was schizophrenic, his father an alcoholic. Throughout the years, food was provided by food stamps, medical care by Medicaid. He said had it not been for these services he and his brother and sister would have gone to bed hungry many nights. But it wasn't just the government who helped, so did his church. A gentleman heard eight-year-old Jim play the piano and told him he would pay for piano lessons as long as Jim wanted them. Jim graduated with a Ph.D. in organ from the University of Washington and went on to teach at Pacific Lutheran University. It takes everyone working together to achieve success. It doesn't have to be all or nothing. And so dear friend, remember it takes a village... government and church both of which are made up of one incredibly important component... people.



To...the reader who found the lost glasses and reported it. Thanks a million. (E-mailed)

To...Kathy Carlin for going above and beyond what you have to. (E-mailed)

To render a Thumbs Up write:

- ebradley@nwkansas.com
- nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

There is no charge to render a thumbs up; names of those providing the information are not used, only the method of transmission

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What would you do to save money?

There's a commercial (I don't know what they are selling) where a woman tells us she always takes the complimentary shampoo from hotel rooms. "I haven't paid for that stuff in years." It makes me laugh.

It's fine she takes the shampoo, that's what it's there for. But if she travels so much she hasn't bought shampoo in years she must not wash her hair very often or else: SHE TRAVELS A LOT! If she has to skimp on shampoo, maybe she should quit traveling. Or if she travels for work find a job where they not only give her an expense account but also pay her enough she can buy personal care products.

In any case, she evidently has a very understanding hairdresser! 'Cause you don't always know what you're getting in those little bottles. Personally, I've never gotten over being lectured about using the wrong kind of shampoo which caused my perm to wash out!

Or so the hairdresser claimed---25 years later and I still have trauma!

These days you need a color veil or color coordinated product, or something that strengthens your hair, or relaxes it, or volumizes, thickens, or whatever your particular set of issues are! If you don't purchase the products at a salon the results are not guaranteed. Using the hotel stuff in a pinch is okay, but seriously!!!!

That stupid commercial (as does my tirade about shampoo) trivializes all the struggles of people who have REAL

Back Home Nancy Hagman



needs. And the nobility of people who truly make a commitment to simple living. Instead we get this: want to feel like you are making a sacrifice? Take the hotel shampoo! Please.

The hubby has a scar from a shampoo bottle. When he was little the Prell bottle broke but they kept using the shampoo. (Remember Prell? The shape of the bottle, the color, the smell?) He got cut on a jagged edge. He says they had to scrimp and throwing out usable shampoo was not an option.

That may be true but as I recall those days it occurs to me that no one had much. And even if you did, you were frugal. People would think you were crazy if you bragged about sacrificing by using hotel shampoo. I miss those days.

We had a great Christmas at my niece Jill's. Great food, great visit, fun gifts for all! Nothing expensive, a lot of home grown and Kansas stuff: lotions made from goat's milk, honey from our farm, beef jerky from a Western Kansas Entrepreneur, and homemade chocolates! Such riches! And the practical: everyone got a little do-hicky to put on a tube of toothpaste to squeeze out the last drop.

Then we went to the Hyatt Place to spend the night! Next morning I dropped the hotel shampoo and soap in my suitcase. I'm collecting soap because a friend who has traveled in Europe suggests each day you put a bar in your day pack. When you use a restroom and there is no soap, as oft is the case, you get out a bar and leave it! How thoughtful! The daughters are going to Europe this summer. I imagine they might like it if I contributed to their air fare; I can't wait to see how excited they are when they get a sack of soap instead!

I don't know why I took the shampoo. Maybe that commercial got to me!

Without a doubt, there are many things we could cut back on. I'm just not sure getting one more use out of a tube of toothpaste or using free shampoo is a practical way to get out of debt.

Interestingly I just read that the United States has some of the cheapest food in the world. You'd think that would be a good thing but it's not. Cheap food encourages us to overeat. It inflates health care costs and supports a superfluous whole industry of weight loss products and gym memberships.

You never know what will end up being a blessing. High food costs might just be good for us. But if you really need to balance your budget---check into a hotel for a few days. The coffee, disposable cups and shower caps, etc are all fair game! You may even get a free breakfast! These days you do what you have to do!